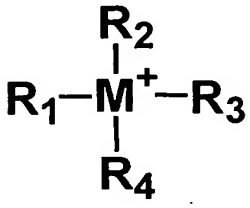
What is claimed is:

1. (corrected) A layered silicate characterized by being ion-exchanged with an organic onium ion represented by the following formula (1):



(1)

(wherein R_1, R_2, R_3 and R_4 each independently represent a C1-30 hydrocarbon group or a heteroatom-containing hydrocarbon group, M is a phosphorus atom to form a phosphonium ion, or M is a nitrogen atom and any of R_1, R_2, R_3 and R_4 form a ring as a heteroaromatic ion, and at least a portion of R_1, R_2, R_3 and R_4 is an imide-substituted hydrocarbon group)
at 50-100% of its ion-exchange capacity, and by having a specific surface area of 2.5-100 m^2/g.

2. (deleted)

3. (deleted)

4. (corrected) A process for production of a layered silicate according to claim 1, characterized in that the organic onium ion-exchanged layered silicate is freeze dried using a medium with a melting point of at least -20°C and below 100°C.

5. A process for production of a layered silicate according to claim 4, characterized in that the medium with a melting point of at least -20°C and below 100°C is a good dispersing medium for the layered silicate.

6. (corrected) A resin composition comprising a thermoplastic resin and a layered silicate according to claim 1, the resin composition being characterized in that the layered silicate content is 0.01-20 parts by weight as

inorganic ash with respect to 100 parts by weight of the thermoplastic resin, and the average number of layers of the layered silicate in the thermoplastic resin is 2-8 layers.

7. A process for production of a resin composition according to claim 6, wherein a single-screw or twin-screw extruder is used for melt kneading of the layered silicate with the thermoplastic resin.

8. A resin composition according to claim 6, wherein the thermoplastic resin is at least one selected from the group consisting of polyesters, polyamides, polyimides, polycarbonates, polyphenylenesulfides and polyolefin-based resins.

9. A film comprising a resin composition according to claim 6.